

# Elvis Costello

## Quotes

*Thinking, Writing, People, Song, Men, Play, Heart, Rocks, Mind, Country,  
Music, Dad, Kids, Years, Hands, Different, Stupid, Wish, Ifs, Way*

I'm just the mere shadow of my former selfishness. I crave the silhouette of your kiss.

~Elvis Costello

I used to be disgusted; now I try to be amused.

~Elvis Costello

I believe that music is connected by human passions and curiosities rather than by marketing strategies.

~Elvis Costello

I feel like a juggler running out of hands.

~Elvis Costello

I can't say anymore than I love you. Anything else would be a waste of breath.

~Elvis Costello

Don't wear your heart on your sleeve when your remarks are off the cuff.

~Elvis Costello

And I don't feel any form of music is beyond me in the sense of that I don't understand it or I don't have some love for some part of it.

~Elvis Costello

The radio is in the hands of such a lot of fools tryin' to anesthetize the way that you feel.

~Elvis Costello

Women hear rhythm differently than men.

~Elvis Costello

Maybe I just never learned my harmony part, because what everybody

says sounds odd to them sounds perfectly natural to me.

~Elvis Costello

I wish you luck with a capital F.

~Elvis Costello

Music is more like water than a rhinoceros. It doesn't charge madly down one path. It runs away in every direction.

~Elvis Costello

History repeats the old conceits, the glib replies, the same defeats.

~Elvis Costello

Don't start me talking, I could talk all night. My mind goes sleepwalking while I'm putting the world right.

~Elvis Costello

They say you better listen to the voice of reason But they don't give you any choice 'cause they think that it's treason. So you had better do as you are told. You better listen to the radio.

~Elvis Costello

Your mind is made up but your mouth is undone.

~Elvis Costello

It's the damage that we do and never know. It's the words that we don't say that scare me so.

~Elvis Costello

Songs are more powerful than books.

~Elvis Costello

And I'm up while the dawn is breaking, even though my heart is aching. I should be drinking a toast to absent friends instead of these

comedians.

~Elvis Costello

I've been lucky to listen to lots of different types of music.

~Elvis Costello

There are many critics who have an idealised version of where my strengths lie.

~Elvis Costello

Morrissey writes wonderful song titles, but sadly he often forgets to write the song.

~Elvis Costello

People become so deeply attached to the sound of one period that they blow a fuse when you move on. I've heard people complain bitterly about recordings they haven't even heard.

~Elvis Costello

My ultimate vocation in life is to be an irritant.

~Elvis Costello

Though the passion still flutters and flickers, it never got into our knickers.

~Elvis Costello

You need a platform upon which to release an orchestral record, otherwise it's just going to be an obscurity.

~Elvis Costello

Imagination is a powerful deceiver.

~Elvis Costello

Why can't a man stand alone? Must he be burdened by all that he's

taught to consider his own? His skin and his station, his kin and his crown, his flag and his nation They just weigh him down

~Elvis Costello

The battle with the bottle is nothing so novel.

~Elvis Costello

She said she was working for the ABC news, it was as much of the alphabet as she knew how to use.

~Elvis Costello

Oh I used to be disgusted and now I try to be amused. But since their wings have got rusted, you know, the angels wanna wear my red shoes.

~Elvis Costello

Really the only thing holding a lot of records together is the personality of the singer, and the will to write all of these different things.

~Elvis Costello

Sometimes I write notes that I have difficulty singing.

~Elvis Costello

I find humming is very useful.

~Elvis Costello

These are the sort of things that push you on in music - the curiosity, a passion for new ideas.

~Elvis Costello

There is something wrong with you if you don't get angry about something.

~Elvis Costello

The theme of exile is attractive to me, because it's sort of like the family business. Not just music, but travel.

~Elvis Costello

And over the last ten years, after my work with the Brodsky Quartet, I had the opportunity to write arrangements for chamber group, chamber orchestra, jazz orchestra, symphony orchestra even.

~Elvis Costello

And obviously, when I started out, I had a little bit more curiosity than some, and went seeking out the original artists, or in some cases searching up country music.

~Elvis Costello

I've never had any real concern about posterity. I hope some people will be sorry when I'm not here, but I'm not playing for that.

~Elvis Costello

You do have to be a bit careful with your voice. It is an instrument.

~Elvis Costello

Patsy Cline belongs shoulder-to-shoulder with Frank Sinatra and Ella Fitzgerald.

~Elvis Costello

My grandfather and my father disagreed about music, not least of all because my dad wanted to improvise. It wasn't just that he wanted to play different music; it was just that he came off the dots.

~Elvis Costello

I can write orchestrations, but I can't sight-read music and play at the same time. I don't have enough facility.

~Elvis Costello

Writing about music is like dancing about architecture - it's really a stupid thing to want to do.

~Elvis Costello

Don't try to touch my heart, it's darker than you think. And don't try to read my mind, because it's full of disappearing ink.

~Elvis Costello

You can be addicted to misery the same way as you can be addicted to drugs.

~Elvis Costello

I know that when I make a record like *The Delivery Man* as a contrast to even *Il Sogno*, this is going to reach a wider audience, because it communicates in that very direct way.

~Elvis Costello

But there are things in *Il Sogno* that the methods of *The Delivery Man* could never achieve.

~Elvis Costello

There's no such thing as an original sin.

~Elvis Costello

You're drinking vintage Elvis Presley wine.

~Elvis Costello

I've never felt British. I'm just not interested in national identity. I don't know why.

~Elvis Costello

It's the stupid details that my heart is breaking for.

~Elvis Costello

People tend to repeat the same quotes at me that I said when I was 23. And of course, you say things then, and sometimes they're ill-advised.

~Elvis Costello

The wages of sin are an expensive infection.

~Elvis Costello

There's no money back guarantee on future happiness.

~Elvis Costello

When you work with new people, I think that it throws all of the matters into relief, because you have to explain yourself every time. It's like crossing a new border. They want to see your documents.

~Elvis Costello

Somebody should clip Sting around the head and tell him to stop using that ridiculous Jamaican accent.

~Elvis Costello

I'm not even sure what I want, but that's not the point - it's that I want it now.

~Elvis Costello

I could promise that I'll always be true to you, but we may not live to be so old.

~Elvis Costello

I'm goin' to take a little trip, down paradise's endless shores. They say that travel broadens the mind, till you can't get your head out of doors.

~Elvis Costello

You can't live in the past, and I don't. I'm not nostalgic about my own work, at all.

~Elvis Costello

When in doubt, play track 4 - it is usually the one you want.

~Elvis Costello

Was it a millionaire who said, "Imagine no possessions"?

~Elvis Costello

Don't tell me you don't know what love is  
When you're old enough to know better.

~Elvis Costello

I'm a man with a mission in two or three editions  
And I'm giving you a longing look  
Everyday, everyday, everyday I write the book.

~Elvis Costello

I love you more than anything in this world. I don't expect that will last.

~Elvis Costello

I've worked hard, every single day since I left school. I think I have a Protestant work ethic.

~Elvis Costello

Life for me is about movement.

~Elvis Costello

Now I just don't know who to tell to go to hell  
Who put the old devil in the distorted angel?

~Elvis Costello

It's a petty thing, but I wouldn't join the Scouts when I was a kid, 'cause you had to swear allegiance to the queen. I'm just not a royalist. I think it's idiotic, a hereditary principle.

~Elvis Costello

I really thought twice about the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame when that

came in. I always was of a mind that it's an inherently stupid idea to put something like that in a glass case.

~Elvis Costello

I'm a working travelling musician, but just on a bigger scale...

~Elvis Costello

Well there's a line that you must toe and it'll soon be time to go but it's darker than you know in those Complicated Shadows

~Elvis Costello

I find it to be the ultimate backhanded compliment when you are compared against yourself.

~Elvis Costello

I think when I was younger I was not very good at writing love songs that didn't have a twist.

~Elvis Costello

Even in a perfect world where everyone was equal. I'd still own the film rights and be working on the sequel.

~Elvis Costello

You'll never be alone in the bone orchard.

~Elvis Costello

'Content' is a word that has never sat well with me. Like 'maturity'. They are two words I've never liked. I think they imply some sort of decay. A settling.

~Elvis Costello

[Commercial] radio is absolutely the enemy of music. They are my sworn and mortal enemy, and I will have nothing to do with them.

~Elvis Costello

Serious music usually doesn't pay.

~Elvis Costello

There was not a lot of rock n roll in the house. Our parents didnt think it was very groovy, and I tend to agree with them. If you grew up with Charlie Parker, Bill Haley wasnt very hip.

~Elvis Costello

Turn up the TV. No one listening will suspect, even your mother won't detect it, no your father won't know. they think that I've got no respect but everything means less than zero.

~Elvis Costello

You've got a chemistry class; I want a piece of your mind; You don't know what you started when you mixed it up with mine.

~Elvis Costello

Good manners and bad breath will get you nowhere.

~Elvis Costello

I wanna bite the hand that feeds me. I wanna bite that hand so badly. I want to make them wish they'd never seen me.

~Elvis Costello

Theres so many fish in the sea That only rise up in the sweat and smoke like mercury

~Elvis Costello

There are some things you can't cover up with lipstick and powder.

~Elvis Costello

Clowntime is over Time to take cover While others just talk and talk Somebody's watching where the others don't walk.

~Elvis Costello

Why'd you have to say that there's always someone who can do it better than I can And don't you think that I know that walkin' on water won't make me a miracle man

~Elvis Costello

I'm not going to get too sentimental, like those other sticker valentines, 'cause I don't know if you are loving some body. I only know it isn't mine.

~Elvis Costello

I've always felt writing a song was a bit like going on location. That's true in an almost literal sense. Where you are seeps in somehow.

~Elvis Costello

I've had an unusual life. A life far removed from most people's experience.

~Elvis Costello

Sometimes I almost feel just like a human being.

~Elvis Costello

She pulls the eyes out with a face like a magnet.

~Elvis Costello

Cause somewhere in the Quizling Clinic, there's a shorthand typist taking seconds over minutes.

~Elvis Costello

She's filing her nails while they are dragging the lake.

~Elvis Costello

I've had a lot of different experiences in music over the years. And not everything you do can satisfy everybody's idealised version of you.

~Elvis Costello

It's what's on the record not what labels on it. You know, that's like getting a box of cornflakes and eating the cardboard.

~Elvis Costello

Obviously the people that I admired, like the Beatles, were really into rock'n'roll, but it was already a little past rock'n'roll when I started listening and making my own choices about music.

~Elvis Costello

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